

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A system for managing the copying of contents to external equipment, said system comprising:

a first reader operable to read in contents to be copied;

a second reader operable to read in identification information of said contents;

a database ~~storing~~ operable to store copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

a collation unit operable to receive said identification information from said second reader, to search said database based on said identification information and to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database;

an electronic watermark inspecting unit operable to inspect electronic watermarks inserted into said contents and to produce inspection results; and

a controller operable to control copying of said contents to the external equipment based on said collation result;

~~wherein said controller searches said database based on at least one of said identification information and attribute information of said contents, and in the event that~~ said collation result indicates a matching record exists, said controller controls copying according to the content of said matching record, and in the event that said collation result indicates a matching record does not exist, said controller controls copying according to said inspection results.

2. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 1 or 42, wherein said controller is operable to compress and

encipher said contents and to then copy said contents to the external equipment.

3. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 1 or 42, wherein said controller and said database are connected to one another via a safe communication path.

4. (currently amended) A system according to Claim ~~1~~42, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

5. (currently amended) A system according to Claim ~~1~~42, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

6. (currently amended) A system according to Claim ~~1~~42, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

7. (currently amended) A method for managing copying of contents to external equipment, comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

maintaining a database of copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

searching said database based on ~~at least one of~~ said identification information ~~and attribute information of~~ said contents to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database; and

in the event ~~that~~ said collation result indicates a matching record exists in said database, controlling copying according to the content of said matching record, and, in the event ~~that~~ said collation result indicates a matching record does not exist in said database, inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection

results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

8. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 7 or 44, wherein said steps of controlling copying include compressing and enciphering said contents and then copying said contents to ~~said the~~ external equipment.

9. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 7 or 44, wherein said database searching step is performed via a safe communication path.

10. (currently amended) A method according to Claim ~~7~~44, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

11. (currently amended) A method according to Claim ~~7~~44, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

12. (currently amended) A method according to Claim ~~7~~44, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

13. (currently amended) An information processing device for executing copying of contents to external equipment, said device comprising:

a first reader operable to read in contents to be copied;

a second reader operable to read in identification information of said contents;

an electronic watermark inspecting unit operable to inspect electronic watermarks inserted into said contents and to produce inspection results;

a database operable to store copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

a collation unit operable to receive said identification information from said second reader, to make inquiry to said database based on said identification information, and to produce an inquiry result; and

a controller operable to communicate with an external server said collation unit, to control copying of said contents according to the inquiry result; and ~~wherein said controller makes inquiry to the external server based on at least one of said identification information and attribute information of said contents, and, according to the inquiry results, to either executes copying of said contents, or inspects said contents with said electronic watermark inspecting unit and controls copying according to said inspection results.~~

14. (currently amended) An information processing device according to Claim 13 or 46, wherein said controller is operable to compress and encipher said contents and to copy said contents to the external equipment.

15. (currently amended) An information processing device according to Claim 13 or 46, wherein the communication between ~~the said controller and the external server~~ said collation unit is made via a safe communication path.

16. (currently amended) An information processing device according to Claim ~~13~~ 46, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

17. (currently amended) An information processing device according to Claim ~~13~~ 46, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

18. (currently amended) An information processing device according to Claim ~~13~~ 46, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

19. (currently amended) A method for executing copying of contents to external equipment, comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

making inquiry to an external server based on at least one of said identification information and attribute information of said contents to obtain an inquiry result, said external server storing copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents; and

according to the inquiry results, either executing copying of said contents, or inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

20. (currently amended) An information processing method according to Claim 19 or 48, wherein said steps of executing copying of said contents and controlling copying of said contents include compressing and enciphering said contents and then copying said contents to ~~said the~~ external equipment.

21. (currently amended) An information processing method according to Claim 19 or 48, wherein said inquiry to said external server is made via a safe communication path.

22. (currently amended) An information processing method according to Claim ~~19~~48, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

23. (currently amended) An information processing method according to Claim ~~19~~48, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

24. (currently amended) An information processing method according to Claim ~~19~~48, wherein said attribute information

is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

25. (currently amended) A server for managing copying of contents, said server comprising:

a database operable to store copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents and which can be searched based on ~~at least one of identification information of said contents which can be searched based on at least one of identification information and attribute information for contents;~~

a receiver operable to receive inquiries regarding whether copying of said contents is permitted;

searching means for searching said database in response to said inquiries to obtain search results; and

a transmitter operable to transmit said search results to inquiring parties.

26. (currently amended) A server according to Claim 25 or 51, wherein said transmitter transmits said search results to said inquiring parties via a safe communication path.

27. (currently amended) A server according to Claim 2551, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

28. (currently amended) A server according to Claim 2551, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

29. (currently amended) A server according to Claim 2551, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

30. (currently amended) A recording medium recorded with a computer readable program for managing copying of contents to external equipment, said program comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

~~obtaining attribute information of said contents;~~

maintaining a database of copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

searching said database based on said identification information of said contents to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database;
and

~~searching said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information; and~~

in the event that said collation result indicates a matching record exists in said database, controlling copying according to the content of said matching record, and, in the event said collation result indicates ~~that a matching record does not exist in said database~~, inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

31. (currently amended) A recording medium according to Claim ~~30~~53, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

32. (currently amended) A recording medium according to Claim ~~30~~53, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

33. (currently amended) A recording medium according to Claim ~~53~~30, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

34. (currently amended) A recording medium recorded with a computer readable program for executing copying of contents to external equipment, said program comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

~~obtaining attribute information of said contents;~~

making inquiry to an external server based on ~~at least one of said identification information and said attribute information~~ of said contents to obtain an inquiry result, said external server storing copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents; and

according to the inquiry result, either executing copying of said contents, or inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

35. (currently amended) A recording medium according to Claim 3455, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

36. (currently amended) A recording medium according to Claim 3455, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

37. (currently amended) A recording medium according to Claim 3455, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

38. (currently amended) A system for managing copying of contents to external equipment, said system comprising:

a first reader operable to read in contents to be copied;

a second reader operable to read in identification information of said contents;

a database ~~storing~~ operable to store copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

an electronic watermark inspecting unit operable to inspect electronic watermarks inserted into said contents and to produce inspection results;

an orthogonal conversion unit operable to perform orthogonal conversion of said contents to produce converted contents;

an encoding compression unit operable to subject said converted contents to quantization and Huffman encoding to produce encoded and compressed contents;

an enciphering unit operable to encipher said encoded and compressed contents to produce enciphered contents;

a collation unit operable to receive said identification information and an orthogonal conversion value of said contents or a hash value of said contents, to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and an orthogonal conversion value of said contents or a hash value of said contents to determine whether a matching record exists in said database, and to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists for said database; and

a controller operable to control copying of said enciphered contents to the external equipment;

~~wherein said controller searches said database based on at least one of said identification information and an orthogonal conversion value of said contents or a hash value thereof, and, in the event that~~ said collation result indicates a matching record exists, said controller controls

copying of said enciphered contents according to the content of said matching record, and, in the event ~~that~~ said collation result indicates a matching record does not exist, said controller controls copying of said enciphered contents according to said inspection results.

39. (currently amended) A method for managing copying of contents to external equipment, said method comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

performing orthogonal conversion of said contents to produce converted contents;

subjecting said converted contents to quantization and Huffman encoding to produce encoded and compressed contents;

enciphering said encoded and compressed contents to produced enciphered contents;

maintaining a database of copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

searching said database based on at least one of said identification information and an orthogonal conversion value of said contents or a hash value ~~thereof~~ of said contents to determine whether a matching record exists for said database; and

in the event ~~that~~ a said matching record exists in said database, controlling copying of said enciphered contents according to the content of said matching record, and, in the event ~~that~~ a said matching record does not exist in said database, inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying of said enciphered contents according to said inspection results.

40. (currently amended) An information processing device for executing copying of contents to external equipment, said device comprising:

a first reader operable to read in contents to be copied;

a second reader operable to read in identification information of said contents;

a database operable to store copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for each of said contents;

an electronic watermark inspecting unit operable to inspect electronic watermarks inserted into said contents and to produce inspection results;

an orthogonal conversion unit operable to perform orthogonal conversion of said contents to produce converted contents;

an encoding compression unit operable to subject said converted contents to quantization and Huffman encoding to produce encoded and compressed contents;

an enciphering unit operable to encipher said encoded and compressed contents to produce enciphered contents; and

a controller operable to control copying of said enciphered contents to the external equipment;

wherein said controller makes inquiry to ~~an~~said ~~external server database~~ based on at least one of said identification information and an orthogonal conversion value of said contents or a hash value ~~thereof~~ said contents, and, according to the inquiry results, either copies said enciphered contents, or controls copying of said enciphered contents according to said inspection results.

41. (currently amended) ~~An information processing~~ method for executing copying of contents to external equipment, said method comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

performing orthogonal conversion of said contents to produce converted contents;

subjecting said converted contents to quantization and Huffman encoding to produce encoded and compressed contents;

enciphering said encoded and compressed contents to produce enciphered contents;

making inquiry to an external server having a database of copy information regarding whether copying is permitted for each of said contents, said inquiry being based on at least one of said identification information and an orthogonal conversion value of said contents or a hash value thereof of said contents; and

according to said inquiry results, either copying said enciphered contents, or inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying of said enciphered contents according to said inspection results.

42. (new) The system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a third reader operable to read in attribute information of said contents,

wherein said collation unit is further operable to receive said attribute information from said third reader, and to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

43. (new) A system according to claim 1 or 42, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermarks, said electronic watermarks corresponding to each of said contents.

44. (new) A method according to claim 7, further comprising:

reading in attribute information of said contents, wherein said searching step includes searching said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents to produce said collation result.

45. (new) A method according to claim 7 or 44, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermark, said electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.

46. (new) An information processing device according to claim 13, further comprising:

a third reader operable to read in attribute information of said contents,

wherein said collation unit is further operable to receive said attribute information from said third reader, and to make inquiry to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

47. (new) A system according to claim 13 or 46, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermarks, said electronic watermarks corresponding to each of said contents.

48. (new) A method according to claim 19, further comprising:

reading in attribute information of said contents, wherein said step of making inquiry includes making inquiry to said external server based on at least one of said

identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

49. (new) A method according to claim 19 or 48, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermark, said electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.

50. (new) A server according to claim 25, wherein said searching means is a collation unit operable to search said database based on said identification information and to create a search result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database.

51. (new) A server according to claim 50, wherein said database can further be searched based on attribute information of said contents, said collation unit being further operable to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

52. (new) A server according to claim 25, 50 or 51, wherein said copy information includes an electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.

53. (new) A recording medium according to claim 30, wherein said program further comprises:

reading in attribute information of said contents,
said collation unit being further operable to receive said attribute information, and to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

54. (new) A recording medium according to claim 30 or 53, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermark, said electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.

55. (new) A recording medium according to claim 34, wherein said program further comprises:

reading in attribute information of said contents, and said step of making an inquiry includes making inquiry to the database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

56. (new) A recording medium according to claim 34 or 53, wherein said copy information includes an electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.

57. (new) A system according to claim 38, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermarks, said electronic watermarks corresponding to each of said contents.

58. (new) A method according to claim 39, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermark, said electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.

59. (new) An information processing device according to claim 40, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermarks, said electronic watermarks corresponding to each of said contents.

60. (new) A method according to claim 41, wherein said copy information includes said electronic watermark, said electronic watermark corresponding to each of said contents.